

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, spoke on the final step that will make health care reform a reality. She also spoke about recent threatening incidents.

While on the House floor Slaughter said, “The rash of ominous threats, voice mails, letters, brick throwing, and other assorted acts of protest is downright despicable and marks a low point in the nation’s history.”

She went on to say, “Despite all of this, Democrats move forward with hope and optimism. It is my sense that as more Americans learn about the provisions of the health care reform legislation, they will in increasing numbers support the vote over the weekend, and polls show this already happening.”

The Rules Committee met so two legislative fixes could come to the House floor. Tonight’s vote leaves only the President’s signature as the last step in health care reform’s long journey.

For more information on today’s reconciliation bill, click [here](#) .

For video of Slaughter’s statement on the House floor, click [here](#) .

Madam. Speaker the disturbing atmosphere that we've seen around the Capitol recently is alarming.

The rash of ominous threats, voice mails, letters, brick throwing, and other assorted acts of protest is downright despicable and marks a low point in the nation's history.

I say this in part from first-hand experience.

As many of you know, my Niagara Falls office was the target of attack last week when someone hurled a brick through the window in the dark of night.

Separately, I received a phone call on my campaign office phone line that referenced sniper teams and an attempt that would be made to target the children of members of Congress who voted for the health care legislation.

Each day my four offices give me a careful log of phone calls and emails from people who have taken the time to share their opinions with me.

And I read each of those comments because I value that input and want to hear from everyone – not just the people who agree with me.

I dare say there isn't a single elected official in the country who has not had a heated run-in with someone who felt strongly that they had voted the wrong way on an issue.

In fact, it's part of this country's great tradition that we not only tolerate dissent but we encourage it.

To speak up and to take part in democracy is a noble and treasured part of the American way.

But all that changed last year when suddenly town hall meetings across the country turned into vicious shouting matches. Persons who had taken the time to go to the town meetings to learn about the health care bill were often times harassed and frightened and unable to learn anything except that they felt somewhat under siege.

I remember that someone arrived at a meeting with a handgun holstered to his leg, who could not have been more than fifty yards away from the President of the United States.

The spirited debate has become negative.

All of us have noticed that in our offices. As I mentioned I have four offices. The calls that came in, I thank my staff, and I'm sure all of you do too, for simply tolerating it. It was all day one day, the calls came in so quickly that not another piece of work could be done in all my offices.

We were threatened, we were cajoled, we were told - mostly by people from Texas and Oklahoma – that they would never vote for me again, which would be very unlikely in New York anyway.

But I am happy to tell you that as of Sunday night, with passage of this bill, all of those calls are gone. We were getting up to, I would say totally in the four offices, nearly a hundred a day.

It's all gone now, and the people who call express sorrow, for the trouble that has been put upon me, and saying that they're America does not do that to anyone, particularly someone that they've put their trust in.

But this week the leader of the national Republican party said that Speaker Pelosi should be put "on the firing line."

Another Republican leader and former national party candidate placed rifle sight targets on a national map showing the Congressional districts of Democrats who supported health care for all Americans. And that same leader urged her supporters: “don’t retreat. Reload.”

And even worse were the remarks made here by the Minority Leader, who recently said that one of my colleagues who backed the legislation was politically a “dead man” back home.

Taken together with the incidents around the country these episodes might prompt a quick and forceful repudiation of comments that would endorse violence.

But instead, we get just the opposite.

When Republicans members went out onto the balcony off the Speaker’s lobby to shout to and encourage rowdy protestors, they were implicitly encouraging a discourse that had already soured.

In fact, I was dismayed to learn – not dismayed, dismayed doesn’t cover it. I was angry, I was concerned, it terrified me the thought that we would have to live through any of that again. When I found out that some of my colleagues were the victims of racial epithets, of spitting, of all kinds of anger, homophobic slurs.

This sort of display is shocking even to someone who has seen some pretty terrible things over the years.

Despite all of this, Democrats move forward with hope and optimism. It is my sense that as more Americans learn about the provisions of the health care reform legislation, they will in increasing numbers support the vote over the weekend, and the polls show this already happening.

It’s a surprise to me that today with the passage of reconciliation by a 56-43 margin in the

Senate that the other side would continue to try to throw up petty roadblocks or complain they haven't had time to read the bill.

Do you want to know what we are debating here today? We're debating two sentences. That's it, two sentences.

Does it make sense to anyone that the other side is demonizing a bill that's already been approved by both the House and Senate and signed into law?

No instead we should celebrate the incredible accomplishment of finally passing this legislation after a struggle of more than 100 years.

I won't even bother reciting all the ways in which ordinary Americans will gain as we shift the balance of power away from insurance companies and back to patients because they will know very shortly. I've already spoken at length about how under our bill families will no longer feel trapped by their coverage or fearful about children with pre-existing conditions.

Health care reform, I am happy to say, is now the law of the land. I encourage my colleagues to join me today in quickly adopting these small technical fixes to the legislation so we can move on to more pressing challenges.